

Canadian Federation of Earth Sciences
Report to the Canadian Association of Geographers

April 22-23, 2022

The annual general meeting of the Canadian Federation of Earth Sciences (CFES) was held as a hybrid meeting, with some attendees meeting in Ottawa and other attending remotely via GoToMeeting.

Friday April 22, 2022

The meeting opened with a round of introductions from CFES Board members and from Member Organizations (MOs). The agenda was approved and the approval of the minutes from the previous CFES AGM was delayed to the following day.

CFES President Rachel Newrick presented an overview of organization activities over the past year: board member changes, council meetings (4-Nov-21, 10-Feb-21), and a variety of special projects undertaken by CFES (eg, climate change statement).

The CFES reaffirmed its position with respect to the Russian invasion of Ukraine with the following statement:

The Canadian Federation of Earth Sciences (CFES), as a member of the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), supports the IUGS statement condemning the invasion of Ukraine by the Russian Federation alongside other scientific organizations.

Two items were discussed at length:

1. Canada Prize Foundation Proposal
 - The Canada Prize, proposed in the late 1980's, was envisioned as a major international award for earth scientists/geoscientists, intended to be equivalent to a Nobel Prize.
 - The seed funding (> \$20 million from a single donor) for the prize was contingent on a number of tax concessions from the federal government; these fell through, and the donation was withdrawn.
 - Since then, the Canada Prize Foundation has been raising funds in the hopes of creating an annual prize; currently, only approximately \$27,000 is available.
 - The Canada Prize Foundation Board, most of whom have been involved since the beginning, have requested that management of the Canada Prize be transferred to the CFES with an aim to re-envision the Prize and carry it forward. A vote of CFES member organizations supported this move
 - Several CFES board members volunteered to establish a committee to evaluate the viability of moving forward with the Canada Prize and to propose any alternative approaches that may be necessary.
2. Potential Canadian bid for International Geological Congress 2028

- Earlier this year, the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS) rescinded Russia's opportunity to host the quadrennial International Geological Congress (IGC) in 2028.
- IUGS has signalled that a bid to host the 2028 in Canada would be positively viewed – Canada has only hosted this massive conference twice: 1913 in Toronto and 1972 in Montreal. The last IGC in North America was in Washington DC in 1989. A bid to host the 2020 IGC in Vancouver ranked 2nd to the bid from India.
- Due to the quick turnaround needed to generate a bid (and the accompanying budget), CFES has been identified as the key organization to drive this bid forward, as it is considered a unifying voice for 13 MOs (CAG included) representing more than 25,000 geoscientists across Canada. CFES contributed to the failed Vancouver bid, and it is possible that a renewed version of that bid could form the basis of a new bid for 2028.
- The CFES Board and MOs agreed to pursue this opportunity, with the support of the Geological Survey of Canada.
- The final bid must be submitted to the IUGC by June 2023.

The first day of meeting adjourned at 7:45 pm ET.

Saturday April 23, 2022

The second day of the meeting focused on three areas:

1. Member Organization reports
 - Each MO in attendance presented a brief report on their activities over the past year
 - A central theme amongst these reports, including that from the CAG, discussed the observed decrease in membership within their organizations. Many MOs attributed this to the lack of in-person conferences as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but also recognized that initial hints of declining membership predate the pandemic. In some Universities, particularly in Atlantic Canada, 2022 graduating classes in geoscience undergraduate programs have fewer than five individuals, and some have none.
 - Marketing of university programs (undergraduate, graduate) and professional accreditation opportunities is seen as an urgent necessity, and CFES should be a unifying body for this across Canada. Estimates suggest that > 50,000 geoscientists will be needed in Canada over the next decade, but where will they come from?
2. CFES financial report and proposed budget
 - The CFES financial report and 2022-23 budget was presented by Financial Director Keith Delaney.
 - The 2021-22 actuals show a \$9093.49 loss, ~70% of which is attributed to investment losses during the pandemic.
 - The CFES estimates a 2022-23 deficit of \$19,431. Most of the expenditures are connected to website changes and development and may not be realized. There was no interest in raising MO dues to offset the deficit.
 - The proposed budget was approved by the CFES Board and MOs.
3. CFES Board reports
 - CFES Past President's Report (Oliver Bonham)

- Development of a new standing committee of the CFES Board – the Audit and Governance Committee. This committee will support the financial director, enable a link between the external auditor and the Board, and support the Board on matters of governance as a not-for-profit federal corporation. Committee composition will be one CFES director (not Executive Committee), one CFES Councillor (ie, MO representative), one geoscientist-at-large.
- The 2021 CFES Mentorship Medal will be awarded to Dr. Hendrik Falck. Terms of reference for the CFES Mentorship Medal were approved by the CFES council.
- CFES Outreach Director Report (Amanda McCallum)
 - The CFES website has undergone significant upgrades this year to consolidate all CFES managed sites under earthsciencescanada.com. Some work is still needed to migrate to a Wordpress platform.
 - The Public Engagement and Educational Outreach Guide is complete and available online. MOs are encouraged to use this to assist with outreach and education planning/programming.
 - The Geologist-in-Residence program at Pukaskwa National Park will run in August 2022 – it had been delayed due to COVID-19. Applications can be found at <https://www.cfes-fcst.ca/gir>.
- CFES External Engagement Director Report (Tom Sneddon)
 - CFES activities were severely disrupted by COVID-19 and the early resignation of the previous Director.
 - Goals for 2022 include renewing engagement with MOs and to recommend to CFES priorities that address MO needs and interests.

During the Annual General Meeting, Beth McLarty Halfkenny was promoted to CFES President. Calls were made to fill vacant Executive positions as well as for any potential new member or observer organizations. The Canadian Geophysical Union (CGU) has requested admission as a MO.

Submitted by Krystopher Chutko, CAG Representative to CFES